

(c) the steps taken by the Government to ensure safety of Indians working and living in Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) Yes.

(b) No case of casualty has been brought to the attention of the Government.

(c) The Government of India is concerned about the safety of Indians working in Iraq. Emigration controls have been tightened to discourage Indians from travelling into Iraq. There is an Official advisory from the Government advising against travel of Indian nationals to Iraq. However, these measures are temporary in nature and are subject to review from time to time.

Refugee camps on Indo-Nepal border

†319. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to raise the matter of lakhs of refugees living in refugee camps at Indo-Nepal border with Governments of Nepal and Bhutan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the rationale put forth by Government therefor; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Indian intelligence agencies have also expressed the apprehension that the anger of lakhs of people living in the said camps could take a dangerous turn?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The issue of refugees living in camps in Nepal is a bilateral matter between Nepal and Bhutan. Government of India is aware that Nepal and Bhutan have been discussing ways and means to resolve the problem. Government have urged both Nepal and Bhutan, with whom we enjoy close and friendly relations, to work towards an early resolution of this humanitarian problem. Government is committed to taking

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

[1 March, 2007]

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all necessary steps to safeguard the security interests of the country, including along the border.

Harassment of Indians in Afghanistan

†320. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the religious places of the Hindus are being defaced and their habitation being destroyed in Afghanistan;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) whether Government have such data which may provide correct information of the oppression being done to the Hindus over there?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There are no reports of religious places of Hindus being defaced and their habitation being destroyed in Afghanistan.

(c) During the nearly three decades of strife and conflicts in Afghanistan, there was widespread destruction of life and property, including those belonging to the Afghan Hindu community. After the overthrow of Taliban in 2001, the Indian Embassy and Consulates in Afghanistan have not received any report of oppression of the Hindu population in Afghanistan. Our Embassy is in regular touch with the Hindu community leaders in Afghanistan.

Agreement with ASEAN countries

321. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether agreements have been signed in various fields with ASEAN countries on the eve of the recently concluded ASEAN-India Summit; and

(b) if so, the details of agreements signed, field-wise?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No agreement was signed between India-ASEAN

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